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U.S. SERIAL NO. 10/685,994
PATENT

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows, substituting any amended claim(s) for the corresponding pending claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A merchandising system comprising:
at least one tray including one or more mounting supports for mounting the tray on a support within a vending machine, the tray adapted to be divided into a plurality of tray zones by one or more tray subdividers that may be selectively mounted in any of two or more predetermined positions, at least one of the predetermined positions being radially askew from an inner edge to an outer edge of the at least one tray,
wherein the tray includes at least one of a slot or a guide selectively receiving a tray subdivider separating one tray zone from another.
2. (Previously Presented) The merchandising system according to claim 1, wherein the tray includes a plurality of slots, a plurality of guides, or both selectively receiving a plurality of tray subdividers separating at least three zones on the tray.
3. (Previously Presented) The merchandising system according to claim 1, wherein the tray zones are one or more of unequal sizes and defined by at least one radially askew tray dividers.

4. (Previously Presented) The merchandising system according to claim 1, further comprising:
a center support member on which the at least one tray is mounted; and
a vend door disposed proximate to an outer edge of the at least one tray, wherein the vend door is selectively movable between a closed position and an open position, wherein the vend door, when in the open position, permits access to only one tray zone.

5. (Previously Presented) A merchandising system comprising:
 - a center support member;
 - a plurality of trays each including one or more mounting supports for mounting the tray on a support within a vending machine, the plurality of trays mounted on the center support member, wherein five trays are mounted at each level of nine levels spaced approximately five inches apart; and
 - a vend door disposed at each level proximate to an outer edge of one of the trays at that level, wherein the vend door is selectively movable between a closed position and an open position, wherein each tray may be divided into up to five tray zones, wherein the vend door, when in the open position, permits access to only one tray zone of the one tray, and
 - wherein the center support member may be selectively rotated to position any selected tray zone on any of the plurality trays proximate to the vend door so that the selected tray zone is accessible when the vend door is in the open position.

6. (Previously Presented) The merchandising system according to claim 5, wherein a distance between the open and closed positions for the vend door is defined by at least one tray subdivider.

7. (Previously Presented) A merchandising system comprising:

at least one tray including one or more mounting supports for mounting the tray on a support within a vending machine, the tray adapted to be divided into a plurality of tray zones by one or more tray subdividers, wherein the tray includes at least one of a slot or a guide selectively receiving a tray subdivider separating one tray zone from another;

a center support member on which the at least one tray is mounted;

a vend door disposed proximate to an outer edge of the at least one tray, wherein the vend door is selectively movable between a closed position and an open position, wherein the vend door, when in the open position, permits access to only one tray zone; and

a catch on the tray subdivider controlling a distance that the vend door moves between the open and closed positions based upon a size of a tray zone positioned proximate to an edge of the vend door.

8. (Previously Presented) The merchandising system according to claim 4, further comprising:

an enclosure having an opening within at least a sidewall, wherein the vend door is positioned over a portion of the opening when in the closed position;

a motor for rotating the center support member; and

controls that, when actuated, rotate the center support member to position a selected tray zone proximate to the vend door.

9. (Previously Presented) The merchandising system according to claim 8, further comprising:
 - a plurality of trays, including the at least one tray, each mounted on the center support member at one of a plurality of different levels, each tray adapted to be divided into a plurality of tray zones and including at least one of a slot or a guide selectively receiving a tray subdivider separating one tray zone from another; and
 - a plurality of vend doors, including the vend door, each associated with a different level and each separately selectively movable between an open position and a closed position, wherein each vend door, when in the open position, permits access to only one tray zone on a corresponding tray.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a merchandising system comprising:
 - providing at least one tray including one or more mounting supports for mounting the tray on a support within a vending machine, the at least one tray adapted for division into a plurality of tray zones; and
 - separating one tray zone from another with a radially askew tray subdivider selectively received by at least one of a slot or a guide on the tray.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 10, further comprising:
 - separating at least three zones on the tray with a plurality of tray subdividers selectively received by a plurality of slots, a plurality of guides, or both on the tray.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, further comprising:
separating the tray into tray zones of unequal sizes using a radial or radially askew tray subdivider.
13. (Original) The method according to claim 10, further comprising:
mounting the at least one tray on a center support member; and
selectively moving a vend door disposed proximate to an outer edge of the at least one tray between a closed position and an open position, wherein the vend door, when in the open position, permits access to only one tray zone.
14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 13, further comprising:
mounting a plurality of trays, including the at least one tray, on the center support member, wherein five trays are mounted at each level of nine levels spaced approximately five inches apart;
selectively rotating the center support member to position any selected tray zone on any of the plurality trays proximate to the vend door so that the selected tray zone is accessible when the vend door is in the open position; and
associating prices individually with each tray zone on each tray at each level.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 13, further comprising:
 - moving the vend door a first distance between the open and closed positions when a first tray zone is positioned proximate to the vend door; and
 - moving a second distance between the open and closed positions when a second tray zone is positioned proximate to the vend door.
16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 13, further comprising:
 - controlling a distance that the vend door moves between the open and closed positions based upon a tray subdivider defining a tray zone positioned proximate to an edge of the vend door.

17. (Previously Presented) A merchandising system comprising:
 - an enclosure around at least a portion of a drum perimeter;
 - a center support member within the enclosure;
 - at least one tray mounted on the center support member at each of a plurality of different levels; each tray adapted to be divided into a plurality of tray zones;
 - at least one radially askew tray subdivider received by at least one of a slot or a guide on at least one of the trays, the tray subdivider separating one tray zone on the at least one of the trays from another; and
 - a vend door disposed proximate to an opening through the enclosure at each of the different levels, each vend door corresponding to the at least one of the trays having a tray subdivider selectively movable between an open position and a closed position,
wherein the vend door, when in an open position, and the tray subdivider permit access to only one tray zone on a corresponding tray.

18. (Previously Presented) The merchandising system according to claim 17, wherein the tray zones are of unequal sizes.

19. (Previously Presented) The merchandising system according to claim 17, wherein a distance that the vend door moves between the open and closed positions depends on a position of the tray subdivider relative to an edge of the tray.
20. (Previously Presented) The merchandising system according to claim 17, wherein at least one of the trays has a plurality of tray subdividers separating at least three tray zones on the tray.